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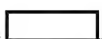
16 December 1958

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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16 December 1958

DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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*USSR: Moscow radio has announced that the anticipated meeting of the Soviet party central committee on agricultural problems has begun. Breaking precedent by reporting the proceedings of a central committee meeting still under way, the broadcast gave a brief summary of Khrushchev's opening speech. The summary suggests that the speech was a routine recital of Soviet achievements in agriculture over the last five years. During the meeting, the committee will probably lay down new guidelines for the long-range development of agriculture. It may also approve personnel changes such as the appointment of a successor to General Serov as head of the Committee of State Security.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

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Burma: In the few weeks that General Ne Win has been premier, the army has taken control of key government ministries and administrative agencies. Important army leaders are also considering various "constitutional" means to ensure retention of power by the military beyond the announced six-month period to end in April. [REDACTED]

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no

Ceylon: The political situation is tense, despite the fact that the explosive communal problem remains under control. The recent disclosure of a plot to assassinate many top political leaders, with which Prime Minister Bandaranaike and other government officials apparently were associated, has set off new attacks on the government from both the left and the right. Bandaranaike's personal position will become even more vulnerable as his implication in the plot is more widely publicized, and the situation invites further plotting by both right and left groups. [REDACTED]

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16 Dec 58

DAILY BRIEF

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Burmese Army's Political Activities and Plans

Col. Maung Maung, an influential army officer who is one of General Ne Win's closest political advisers, 25X1

stated recently that six months was too short a time in which to establish stability in Burma, and that it would be impossible to hold elections before 1960. Maung Maung indicated that the army was searching for "constitutional" means of extending the tenure of the Ne Win government beyond the six-month period stipulated under the terms of the "transfer of power" agreement which enabled Ne Win to come to power with a semblance of constitutionality in late October. The general tenor of Maung Maung's remarks suggests that the army is determined to remain in power indefinitely beyond the achievement of its stated objectives of pacifying the country and limiting the Communist threat.

In the short time Ne Win has been in office, the army has moved rapidly to establish its control over major government ministries and other administrative agencies. Army colonels assigned as "liaison officers" to the key Home, Defense, and Information Ministries are said to dominate them, and the army has openly assumed responsibility for governing the city of Rangoon and the government-owned railways and civil airline. The army has also undertaken such politically popular campaigns as a cleanup of Rangoon's streets and the reduction of consumer prices. Preoccupation with these matters, however, may have delayed the campaign of the strongly anti-Communist army to stamp out Communist guerrillas.

The growing interest of the army in political and economic policies is probably also reflected in the government's alleged decision not to renew en masse the contracts of 22 Soviet agricultural technicians who have been working in Burma for two years. Instead, three of the Russians will be offered contracts in their individual capacities to carry out one of six previously scheduled joint projects. The remaining five projects are said to have been canceled. 25X1

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The Situation in Ceylon

The political situation in Ceylon continues to deteriorate despite the fact that the explosive Tamil problem remains under control for the present. Exposure on 20 November of a coup plot--allegedly led by a senior police official, supported by several cabinet ministers, and implicating Prime Minister Bandaranaike--has set off new attacks on the government from both right and left.

It now is apparent that the prime minister at least acquiesced in the plot to assassinate most other top political leaders and establish himself at the head of a conservative "dictatorial regime." Bandaranaike's personal prestige, already eroded by Ceylon's chronically unstable political and economic conditions, will be further undermined by his slowness in appointing a commission to investigate the coup charges. If charges against him are documented during an inquiry, he is likely to be faced with strong pressure for his resignation.

The Bandaranaike government has been further weakened by the renewal of open conflict within the cabinet between moderate elements--several of whom were implicated in the recent plotting--and far-leftist Minister of Agriculture Philip Gunawardena.

If either rightist or leftist groups seek to exploit the tensions over the exposed conspiracy, they may stimulate their opponents to plot another coup. [REDACTED] 25X1

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